

REMARKS

Claims 1-4, 7-14 and 17 are pending. Applicants have added the limitation of previous claim 16 to claim 1, and amended claims 8 and 9 correspondingly.

Claims 1-4, 7-14 and 17 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over various combinations of Topolkaev (US, 6,492,452), Warzelhan (US 6,018,004), Bragodia (US 6,395,386) and Hynook (WO 92/13019). Applicants have added the limitation of previous claim 16 to the other claims, thereby overcoming these rejections.

Claim 16 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Topolkaev, Warzelhan and Holy (US 2002/0028857). Holy is not prior art with respect to the present application. Applicants enclose a verified English translation of the priority application DE 199 43 774.2 filed on September 13, 1999. Holy claims priority only to March 31, 2000. Therefore, this rejection has been overcome and should be withdrawn.